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Today and Tomorrow . . . By Walter Lippmann

The Heavily Burdened President

THE PRESIDENT is returning to Washington a heavily burdened man, confronted by problems and facing agonizing decisions. One correspondent, (Carroll Kilpatrick), who has been with him in Texas, says that he feels trapped by events.



Who's fault is it? Is it the fault of his enemies abroad and his opponents at home, that after a brilliant beginning and a triumphant election he is in such trouble today? "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves." The President's troubles are not due to a series of unlucky events, but are interconnected and have a common source. His troubles originate in mistakes of judgment about American power and interest in the world. The mistakes led him into an expanding and unmanageable war. This trouble has been compounded by his mistake at home in thinking that he could fight this war without making it painful to anyone except the poor fellows who

are drafted and who are getting shot at.

THE PRESIDENT is trapped by his mistakes of judgment. It has been he and no one else, not the two Presidents before him, who has so enlarged and transformed the war that American prestige is now staked on the question of whether this Nation of 200 million people can defeat a primitive nation of 16 millions.

The President is trapped by his mistake of judgment in telling the people that the country could fight the war and also build the Great Society.

The root of these mistakes has been pride, a stubborn refusal to recognize the country's limitations and his own limitations, the ambition to remake the United States and also to remake Asia as well. Such pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall.

IN RECOGNIZING that his mistakes are due to the sin of pride, he can find the remedy for his trouble. The remedy cannot be found by image-making and public relations, by better slogans and cleverer speech writers. It can be done only by Lyndon Johnson himself and by him only if he will face the

reality and will seek to solve the problems before him rather than to fight them.

Unless he himself makes a sharp turn to break out of his entanglements, he will remain trapped. Today he has already reached the point where the critical question in American politics has become whether it is possible for this President to bring the war to *any* conclusion. It was the same question which in 1952 produced a Republican landslide. The country was convinced that the Democrats could never make peace. If the President does not break out of his entanglement today, it may well provoke another Republican landslide in 1968.

Because they realize this, the Democrats today are so depressed and demoralized.

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